THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Under the recommendation of Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC) assistance is provided to States under two heads viz. Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). TFC has allocated a sum of Rs. 16,000 crore as Centre's share under CRF for its award period 2005-10

The Group of Ministers (High Level Committee) decides about the quantum of assistance to States from NCCF for taking immediate relief and rehabilitation measures necessitated by severe calamity.

The Disaster Management Act, 2005 inter-alia provides for setting up of a National Disaster Response Fund and a National Disaster Mitigation Fund in the context of Management of Natural disasters. Dates of coming into force of various provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005 including those relating to setting up of a National Disaster Response Fund and a National Disaster Mitigation Fund have not been notified so far. No definite sums of money have been allocated so far.

Income tax exemption to Maharashtra Maritime Board

2296. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Maharashtra has approached his Ministry for exemption in favour of Maharashtra Maritime Board from the payment of Income Tax; and

(b) if so, by when a favourable decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An amendment to section 10(20) of the Income-tax Act to provide exemption from income tax to Maharashtra Maritime Board is not under consideration.

Guidelines for merger of banks

2297. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the guidelines for acquisition and merger of banks;

(b) whether Government have stipulated that all old private sector banks to have a minimum net worth of Rs. 300 Crores and in the case of